The purpose for which this Committee was appointed may be found by a reference to By-Laws Art. I. Sect. 6. "It shall be the duty privilege of this board to examine the minutes of the several committees of inquiry as often as once in each year, & to take other measures, if necessary, to ascertain whether they attend to the duties respectfully assigned them."

This your Com. has done, find that the books of the secretaries have been well kept; that the committees have met at their customary times; that some of the duties relating to the internal matters of the several com. have been properly attended to. There have been a sufficient number of members to make the meetings interesting, with the exception of the com. on Sailors, Soldiers & Africans. This will account for much of the delinquency of that com.

But there is one thing to which your com. call the attention of the Board, it is something demanding instant remedy. This is the great delinquency of all the com. in the discharge of their duties to the Soc. of Inquiry.

Your Com. have taken the minutes of the several com. of Inquiry, & compared them with the minutes of the Soc. & the following is the result.

The Com. on Foreign Mis. failed to give their monthly report in Sept. Oct. Dec. Jan. March, April May. A monthly was given in the place of the Annual Report. The Annual Essay was presented.

Com. on Bibles, Tracts Religious Education failed to give a monthly report in Sept. Feb. May. The annual report & Essay were both presented.

Com. on Public morals, Com. ch. & Infidelity failed in Oct. Nov. Feb. April & May. They also failed to give the annual Essay; but presented the annual Report.

The Com. on Sailors, Soldiers, & Africans failed in every month but March - for two months had no meeting. Their annual Essay was not presented.

Thus it appears that of 7 monthly reports which should have been given by each Com. The Com. on For. Mis. presented 2; Com. on Dom. Mis. none. Com. on Bib. Tracts & Religious Education, 4: Com. on Public morals & Temperance, 2: Com. on Sailors, Soldiers & Africans, none - Of 5 annual reports, 4 were given. Of 6 annual Essays one was presented.

The question is not whether the Soc. has lost much valuable information by these failures. But the point the Com. present is, that there is a great, too great delinquency. And if things continue in this way our Soc. will become a great complicated machine, with no motive power else.

Your Com. have examined the minutes since 1868 in order to see if this state of things was customary. They find that tho' there are some failures, yet by no means to the extent of last year.

It may be remarked in passing that the Com. on Sailors, Soldiers & Africans, in those 5 years were equal to the best Com. "Poor is the gold become dim."

The several Com. of inquiry do not seem to understand that when an annual report or Essay is presented no monthly report is required from that Com. Con. Art. 5. Much confusion has arisen from this & from the Com. not recollecting when their turn comes for the annual report or Essay. This was the case not only last year, but frequently during the years mentioned above.

The question comes to us what is to be done? Shall we permit things to go on as they did last year, or shall we

efforts be made to rejuvenate the Society. We fear that there is an impression, that the reading of 10 minute reports is irksome, to the Soc. & that the members are glad to dispense with them. Now as long as this feeling prevails we need not wonder at the failure of reports. But we think this might be made an interesting & profitable exercise to the Society & to the reporter. To the former, in that they would have presented, by the reports, a bird's eye view of all the great benevolent operations of the month, & the scraps of latest intelligence, concerning them collected into one dish. It would be profitable to the reporter, because it would teach him, how to detect ~~condense~~ condense. An art by no means to be despised. But the reporters should keep within 10 minutes, & these with the annual report or Essay would not occupy more than one hour & half, which we are sure could not be spent much more profitably.

But whether it be interesting or not is only an incidental question. The main fact is this, our constitution requires it, & we ought either abide by that, or change it. That we do not meet its requirements is most evident. Each com. has been delinquent some shamefully so. all have laid themselves open to admonitions from the Board. The com. suggest whether it would not be advisable to lessen the number of monthly reports, so that thereby more punctuality may be obtained. If it should be that desirable, we would propose to alter the constitution so that each com. should present a ~~monthly~~ report every two months

There is another matter, which though not coming directly under the supervision of this Com. may not be out of place to mention here. There ~~has been~~ is a complaint by the Com. on Domes. Mis. against the

Com. on Dom. Ch. Infidelity, that they have taken their evening to hold the meetings of that Com. By a reference to the minutes of each it appears that the Com. on D. Mis. have met on Monday evening since 1845. & that the Com. on Dom. Ch. & Infidelity changed to that evening - the same evening of the month, in Nov. 1850. The complaint is that members belonging to Com. of D. Mis. cannot attend the other com. But this operates as much against one com. as against the other. We think this is a subject, which concerns the com. themselves, & should be settled by them. The constitution requires a ~~man~~ member of Soc. to belong to one - allows him to belong to two. The constitution gives the Board of Managers no power in the matter. But if any com. feel themselves aggrieved by the conduct of another com. we think they have the right to appeal to the Board. We think it at least a mooted point whether one com. should interfere with another com. as to prevent the members from connecting themselves with both. ~~The~~ Your com. do not feel themselves called on to decide this. If however these two conflicting com. cannot agree between themselves, we would advise them to appeal to the Board, appointing their own advocates, & let the matter be there tried; each com. agreeing to abide by the decision of the Board. In this way a precedent may be established in this subject.

All of which is most respectfully submitted by

Com. on Minutes — Geo. L. Smith
D. Henry Kaufman.
Saml. Hodge.